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COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY NOTE**

Uruguay

SUMMARY

The Executive Director presents the country programme strategy note for Uruguay for a programme of cooperation for the period 1997 to 2001.

Basic indicators for health, nutrition and education show that Uruguay has achieved most of the decade goals related to child survival and development. However, social and geographic disparities jeopardize the rights of many children and adolescents. Child protection presents major challenges, as Uruguay has yet to incorporate new programmes and plans that ensure the rights of all Uruguayan children. Lessons learned from past cooperation in the areas of health and education demonstrate that the country has excellent technical capacity in these fields. Both the situation of children in Uruguay, analysed from the perspective of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the national goal to ensure equal opportunities for all suggest that UNICEF cooperation should focus more on areas of legislation, protection and advocacy.

The national goals reflect the country's commitments to the World Summit for Children and its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The major objective of the proposed programme is to inform and sensitize Uruguayan society about the situation of children and their rights and to improve related legislation, public policies and social practices. The strategies for achieving this objective are advocacy about the situation of children and their rights as a key element for participation, education and social mobilization, in combination with capacity-building of state institutions responsible for the protection of children through technical assistance and training. This mix and balance of strategies should help to generate much public support for children's rights.

* E/ICEF/1996/2.

** An addendum to the present report containing the final country programme recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval at its third regular session of 1996.

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THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

1. Unequal opportunities and moderate economic growth, along with unequal access to quality education and health, have created an increasing problem of poverty and social marginalization for many young people in Uruguay. Thus, the Government at present is revising the orientation of its social policies, searching for new approaches to guarantee the well-being of the entire population.

2. The relevant indicators for health, nutrition and education show that the country has attained most of the mid-decade goals related to child survival and development. Goals for the year 2000 for the universal iodination of salt, the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and the reduction of moderate malnutrition still present challenges. However, social disparities related to the protection of children jeopardize the prospects of equal rights for all Uruguayan children. Such important social problems as intra-family violence, street children, working children, adolescent pregnancies, child prostitution and drug consumption have not yet been accurately or sufficiently addressed by public policies. The Child Code of 1934 does not yet comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child with respect to adoption, child battering, abandoned children and measures for adolescents in conflict with the law, resulting in a high level of institutionalized poor children. Uruguay is currently revising the Child Code to conform to the provisions of the Convention. However, a new law recently passed to increase public security enables the courts to imprison adolescents in adult penal establishments. In addition, Uruguay has yet to incorporate into legislation initiatives that would let children and adolescents express their opinions concerning matters directly affecting them within the family, in school and in public institutions where family-oriented policies are generated.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST COOPERATION

3. The current programme of cooperation for Uruguay is for the period 1992-1996. A sectoral approach in the assessment of the situation of children resulted in a large number of projects with weak linkages that address needs related to survival and development. There has been no comprehensive analysis of the situation of children related to the country's development goals and, as a result, there are insufficient linkages between national priorities and the country programme. Thus, the projects that promote the introduction of non-conventional methodologies will be discontinued in the next programme of cooperation.

4. With respect to child protection, institutionalized children continue to be an important problem. UNICEF support concentrated on introducing innovative alternatives to institutionalization, but insufficient attention was paid to necessary policy and administrative changes in the key state institution, the National Institute for Children (Instituto Nacional del Menor (INAME)). In the future, UNICEF should employ a more holistic approach, incorporating the legal dimension, technical assistance and advocacy to address this situation.

5. The programme focused on health, child development and pre-school education and did not sufficiently address some aspects of the country's priorities and its sophisticated technical capacity. As a result, the technical level of UNICEF cooperation in these areas was not adequately considered. The mid-term review recommended that UNICEF cooperation concentrate on child protection, an area of special competence for UNICEF and the primary objective of the proposed programme.

6. UNICEF could be more productive by working not only with government organizations but also by increasing work with United Nations agencies, civil society, universities and academic institutions, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

7. The communication strategy was based on the result of a nationwide survey on the perception of children and of UNICEF in Uruguay. UNICEF was readily identified as an international aid organization, but was not perceived as being active in the country. UNICEF advocacy and communication have since become more prominent in the mass media and civil society, and the situation of Uruguayan children is more prominent in the media, e.g. threats and violations of child rights are seriously analysed. There is a strong basis for the programme to develop an effective social mobilization strategy and to help improve resource mobilization by Uruguayan organizations and fund-raising in general for UNICEF in Uruguay.

PROPOSED COUNTRY PROGRAMME STRATEGY

8. The new programme proposes a development strategy based on democratic consolidation, increased equality and social integration. There is an emphasis on the elimination of all forms of discrimination that limit the exercise of rights. This emphasis creates new perspectives for integrating children, adolescents and women into society. Other objectives are the modernization of the State, investment in people and strengthening the family.

9. The national strategy is in line with the commitments made by Uruguay at the World Summit for Children and by its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The strategy offers an excellent programmatic framework to inform and sensitize Uruguayan society to the situation of children and their rights, and the extent to which child rights are reflected in legislation, public policies and social practices.

10. The objectives proposed for the programme of cooperation for 1997-2001 are (a) to increase knowledge and public awareness in Uruguayan society regarding the situation of children and their rights; (b) to support the country in the process of harmonizing national legislation concerning children, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (c) to promote the deinstitutionalization of children and the protection of children and adolescents in conflict with the law and those whose rights are not observed; (d) to promote the participation of children and adolescents in the solution of their problems; and (e) to improve monitoring of the goals for the decade and the goals of the national programme of action (NPA).

11. An advocacy strategy will cover children, adolescents, families, government institutions and organizations in civil society to promote understanding of the Convention and the situation of children and their rights in Uruguay. Special emphasis will be placed on offering children opportunities to state their opinions regarding their situation and their participation in decision-making on issues affecting them. A capacity-building strategy will be applied in cooperation with the government institutions responsible for the protection of children, using technical assistance and training in the process of adapting legislation to the standards of the Convention. This increased advocacy will help to empower those groups to create a demand for realizing children's rights. A gender perspective will promote specific activities to empower girls and women.

12. The revision of the Child Code of 1934 is the initial step in adapting all national legislation concerning children to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF will support this national legislative initiative by providing technical assistance to the Supreme Court of Justice, the Ministry of Public Education, magistrates and parliamentarians. The process of harmonization of national legislation with the Convention will be monitored. NGOs already working on human rights will be trained in the provisions of the Convention. Advocacy will help to sensitize all participating organizations to the situation of Uruguayan children, with special emphasis in those areas where children's rights are not observed.

13. UNICEF will support the national goal of increased social integration of disadvantaged groups through technical assistance for revising the norms and regulations of INAME regarding the institutionalization of children. This will include the development of mechanisms to prevent unfair internment of poor children in order to harmonize government social policies on the family with the institutional policies of INAME. A design for the deinstitutionalization of children will be pursued in close collaboration with local governments and NGOs. Alternative models to institutionalization will be formulated and implemented with NGOs, and these are expected to be supported through local fund-raising.

14. Knowledge about threats to and violations of child rights will be improved through studies and analyses of the protection needs of such groups as school drop-outs, working children and child victims of battering, drug abuse and sexual abuse. The opinions of children on their problems will be of great importance. Collaboration with other United Nations agencies will strengthen the analysis of and information about the situation of children and their rights. The resulting information will be used as educational and social mobilization tools.

15. UNICEF will support the revision of the NPA to include emerging problems affecting the rights of children. UNICEF also will continue to support monitoring of the achievement and sustainability of the decade and NPA goals, especially at the local level. Local fund-raising will be sought to finance activities related to the goals.

16. Advocacy, communication and social mobilization will support the achievement of the objectives related to legislation and rights. They also will promote the mobilization of human, technical and financial resources in favour of children. Through this approach, UNICEF cooperation will help to sensitize society, particularly the family, to the rights of the child. Local fund-raising will support initiatives to promote children's participation and also progressively generate supplementary funds for the country programme.

ESTIMATED PROGRAMME BUDGET

Estimated programme cooperation, 1997-2001 a/
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	General resources	Supplementary funds	Total
Legislation and rights	2 000	1 000	3 000
Studies and evaluations	500	500	1 000
Advocacy, communication and social mobilization	1 250	250	1 500
Total	3 750	1 750	5 500

a/ These are indicative figures only which are subject to change once aggregate financial data are finalized.